United Nations CTOC/COP/2018/4

Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

Distr.: General
25 July 2018

Original: English

Ninth session
Vienna, 15–19 October 2018
Item 2 (d) of the provisional agenda*
Review of the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto: Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition

Activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to promote and support the implementation of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

Report of the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to resolution 8/3 of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, entitled "Strengthening the implementation of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime". In that resolution, the Conference recalled that the Organized Crime Convention and its supplementary Firearms Protocol were among the principal global legal instruments to combat the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.

2. In the same resolution, the Conference noted with appreciation the assistance provided to States by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) through its Global Programme on Firearms, and requested UNODC, through the Global Programme on Firearms, to continue to assist requesting States in their efforts to adhere to and implement the Firearms Protocol. The Conference also encouraged those Member States in a position to do so to make available extrabudgetary resources to enable the Office to implement its mandate in this regard.

3. Also in that resolution, the Conference requested UNODC to continue to assist requesting States in their efforts to strengthen their firearms control measures,

* CTOC/COP/2018/1

V.18-05149 (E) 060818 070818

Please recycle

consistent with the Firearms Protocol, with a view to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, and to promote and encourage international cooperation in criminal matters, pursuant to the Convention, with the aim of investigating and prosecuting the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, including when related to terrorism and to other crimes, such as urban crime committed by gangs, through regional and cross regional workshops, including for countries that are on relevant trafficking routes.

4. Also in its resolution 8/3, the Conference took note with appreciation of the *UNODC Study on Firearms 2015*, developed and disseminated by the Global Programme on Firearms of the UNODC pursuant to Conference resolutions 5/4, 6/2 and 7/2 as a starting point for further analysis on firearms trafficking, welcomed the valuable efforts of the Office in that respect, and requested UNODC to continue to collect and analyse, on a regular basis, quantitative and qualitative information and suitably disaggregated data on trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, taking into consideration the usefulness of the study and taking into account target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as to continue to share and disseminate its findings on best practices, the dimensions and characteristics of such trafficking, and lessons learned.

5. In that context, in the same resolution the Conference requested UNODC to continue in its efforts to improve the methodology of the *UNODC Study on Firearms 2015*, and in that regard invited the Office and other organizations with similar firearms data-collection mandates to continue to explore ways to cooperate and coordinate with each other, with a view to developing synergies between the distinct reporting obligations of States parties and, where appropriate, facilitating the production of standardized and comparable data.

6. Also in that context, the Conference reiterated its invitation to States parties that had not yet done so to provide UNODC with quantitative and qualitative data and information on trafficking in firearms, and to those that had provided information to continue doing so, with a view to enhancing the exchange of information between Member States and the availability of data.

7. The Firearms Protocol has a total of 115 Parties. Since the eighth session of the Conference, Fiji acceded to the Protocol in September 2017. Although several Member States have informed the Secretariat about ongoing and future internal procedures to ratify or accede to the Protocol, the number of Parties to the Firearms Protocol remains below the number of Parties to the Convention and the other Protocols supplementing the Convention. The comparatively low adherence status continues despite the periodically expressed invitation by the Conference to States that have not yet done so to consider becoming parties to the Firearms Protocol and to fully implement its provisions.

8. The present report informs the Conference about the activities of UNODC in promoting and supporting the ratification and implementation of the Firearms Protocol, over the last two years.[1] Key achievements include the following:

(a) Substantive servicing of the fifth and sixth meetings of the Working Group on Firearms, held in May 2017 and May 2018;

(b) The organization of more than 50 events, seminars and training sessions, benefiting more than 60 countries and reaching more than 800 people through its activities to prevent and combat the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition;

(c) UNODC extended its scope of direct technical assistance activities to include the Middle East and North Africa region as well as the Balkan region;

[1] For more information, see CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/3.

(d) The launch of the illicit arms flows questionnaire, which serves as the basis for periodic data collection and analysis to identify firearms trafficking trends and patterns, monitor steps towards achievement of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals and support Member States in developing an evidence base for decision-making at the policy and operational levels.[2]

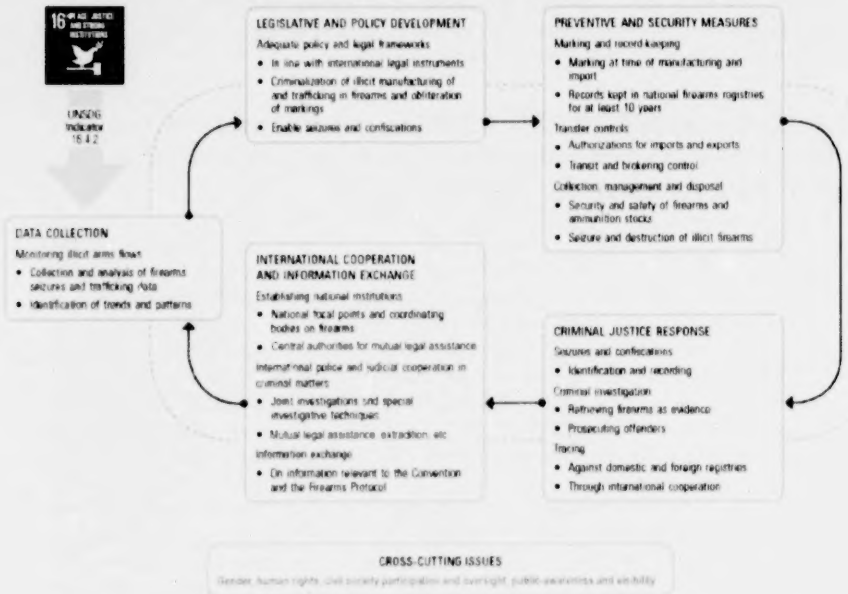
II. Integrated approach of UNODC to prevent and combat the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition

9. The work of UNODC to prevent and counter illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition is spearheaded through the UNODC Global Programme on Firearms. The Global Programme follows an integrated approach based on five major pillars, each covering one of five interrelated areas of action to address the different aspects of the problem: (a) enhancing policy and normative development through awareness-raising and legislative assistance to support ratification and implementation of the Protocol; (b) provision of technical support for the implementation of preventive and security measures to prevent the illicit manufacturing and theft of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition; (c) strengthening criminal justice responses to detect, investigate and prosecute the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition; (d) fostering and promoting international cooperation and information exchange to address the transnational dimension of trafficking in illicit firearms and related issues; and (e) mapping and monitoring flows of illicit firearms by means of global data collection and analysis to enhance the intelligence picture of trafficking in firearms and its criminal context.

10. The Programme's integrated approach is built on the premise that only the joint interaction of all five pillars can provide a meaningful framework for successful action. Together, the five pillars also contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular target 16.4 (By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime). The approach is complemented by a number of cross-cutting elements, such as gender mainstreaming, human rights and civil society participation and oversight, which are streamlined into the Programme's activities.

[2] For more information on the contribution of the Firearms Protocol to supporting the achievement of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, see CTOC/COP/WG.6/2017/3.

Figure I
Integrated five-pillar approach of the Global Programme on Firearms


16
UNSDG Indicator 16.4.2
LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT
Adequate policy and legal frameworks
• In line with international legal instruments
• Criminalization of illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms and obliteration of markings
• Enable seizures and confiscations
PREVENTIVE AND SECURITY MEASURES
Marking and record-keeping
• Marking at time of manufacturing and import
• Records kept in national firearms registries for at least 10 years
Transfer controls
• Authorizations for imports and exports
• Transit and brokering control
Collection, management and disposal
• Security and safety of firearms and ammunition stocks
• Seizure and destruction of illicit firearms
DATA COLLECTION
Monitoring illicit arms flows
• Collection and analysis of firearms seizures and trafficking data
• Identification of trends and patterns
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE
Establishing national institutions
• National focal points and coordinating bodies on firearms
• Central authorities for mutual legal assistance
International police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters
• Joint investigations and special investigative techniques
• Mutual legal assistance, extradition, etc
Information exchange
• On information relevant to the Convention and the Firearms Protocol
CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESPONSE
Seizures and confiscations
• Identification and recording
Criminal investigation
• Retrieving firearms as evidence
• Prosecuting offenders
Tracing
• Against domestic and foreign registries
• Through international cooperation
CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES
Gender, human rights, civil society participation and oversight, public awareness and visibility

III. Activities to assist States in the implementation of the Protocol

11. During the reporting period, UNODC, under the Global Programme on Firearms, was able to implement over 50 activities, including collaboration with 14 countries in Africa, the Western Balkans and Latin America in the area of direct technical support and cooperation, and supported over 60 countries through regional activities, reaching a total of more than 800 people through donor support.[1]

A. Servicing intergovernmental bodies and processes related to firearms

1. Conference of the Parties and the Working Group on Firearms

12. For the fifth meeting of the Working Group on Firearms, on 8–10 May 2017, UNODC prepared a report on the contribution of the Firearms Protocol in supporting the achievement of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals and the activities of UNODC to promote its ratification and implementation (CTOC/COP/WG.6/2017/3), as well as the draft questionnaire for the review of the implementation of the Firearms Protocol, in accordance with Conference resolution 8/2 (CTOC/COP/WG.6/2017/2).

13. For the sixth meeting of the Working Group, held on 2 and 3 May 2018, the Secretariat prepared two background papers: a background paper on practical measures under the Firearms Protocol that contribute to preventing criminal organizations and terrorist groups from acquiring weapons through illicit trafficking, and to monitoring the achievement of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development

[1] During the reporting period, activities of the Global Programme on Firearms were funded through donations from Germany, Italy, Sweden and the European Union, as well as from Denmark and Japan through the UNODC Sahel Programme and from Panama through its national project.

Goals (CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/2) and a background paper on the activities of UNODC to promote the ratification and implementation of the Firearms Protocol (CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/3). The Working Group also had before it a non-paper containing the amended draft questionnaire for the review of the implementation of the Firearms Protocol (CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/CRP.1) and a conference room paper containing the questionnaire on illicit arms flows (CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/CRP.2).

14. The reports on those meetings of the Working Group, containing the recommendations adopted by the Working Group, have been transmitted to the Conference at its ninth session (CTOC/COP/WG.6/2017/4 and CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/4).

2. Support to and cooperation with other inter-governmental bodies

15. During the reporting period, UNODC provided input for reports of the General Assembly and the Security Council on issues relating to firearms, such as the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on small arms and light weapons (S/2017/1025) and the 2018 report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the mandates of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, with particular reference to the technical cooperation activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (A/73/131).

16. With a view to fostering cooperation and coordination of technical assistance activities to achieve sustainable impact, UNODC participated in the first meeting of governing bodies and secretariats of international instruments and mechanisms on small arms and light weapons organized by the Government of Mexico, held in Mexico City in April 2018.

17. UNODC also participated in the seventy-second session of the First Committee of the General Assembly (Disarmament and International Security Committee) held in New York in October 2017, and participated in the Second and Third Conferences of States Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Geneva in August 2016 and September 2017. Furthermore, UNODC attended the Third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York on 18–29 June 2018, and contributed to the Conference's preparatory process, including through a series of thematic expert symposiums, held prior to the Conference, to foster discussion and exchange among experts on several substantive topics: tracing and stockpile management in conflict and post-conflict situations (held in New York in October 2017); the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (held in New York in October 2017); manufacturing, technology and design of small arms and light weapons and resulting challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and the International Tracing Instrument (held in Brussels in November 2017); and synergies between the Programme of Action on Small Arms and other instruments, including the Firearms Protocol (held in Geneva in November 2017).

18. Representatives of UNODC participated in, among other international meetings, the Fourth Conference of the States Parties to the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, held in Mexico City in April 2018; the first session of the General Assembly of the African Police Cooperation Organization, held in Algiers in May 2017; the forty-seventh regular session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, held in Cancun, Mexico, in June 2017; and the first Conference of the States Parties to the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition, Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly, held in Yaoundé in June 2018.

B. Development of tools

19. Several tools and publications have been developed by UNODC to provide practical guidance and support the delivery of quality technical assistance to Member States.

20. The legislative tools developed in previous years continue to be relevant and useful for practitioners and are being used in the delivery of legislative and technical assistance. For example, the UNODC Model Law on Firearms, developed in 2010 and updated in 2013, was downloaded from the UNODC website almost 4,000 times in 2017. During the same period, the *Digest of Organized Crime Cases*, developed in 2012, was downloaded more than 23,700 times. The cases contained in the *Digest* have all been uploaded in the knowledge management portal known as Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime (SHERLOC), and new cases continue to be collected, analysed and uploaded. Finally, the *Comparative Analysis of Global Instruments on Firearms and Other Conventional Arms: Synergies for Implementation*, developed by UNODC in 2015, was downloaded almost 1,300 times in 2017 and has become a frequently referenced tool among practitioners.

21. During the reporting period, UNODC also conducted a comparative study on the implementation of import marking requirements for firearms and ammunition and the transposition of those requirements into national legislation in selected countries of Europe and North America, as part of its legislative assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia; the study was translated into Bosnian and shared with national authorities.

22. The comprehensive firearms training curriculum continues to be used for capacity-building activities and is regularly reviewed and updated. The curriculum currently comprises 19 modules containing practical information on the implementation of national controls to prevent and combat trafficking in firearms, the identification of trafficking in firearms and operational practices on how to investigate and prosecute cases of trafficking in firearms. In 2017, parts of the curriculum were translated into French and disseminated during training activities.

23. On the basis of existing training modules, UNODC developed, conducted pilot-testing on and delivered several courses. In the period 2017–2018, two new specialized training courses were developed: one on the detection of firearms at land border crossings and one on the detection of firearms in postal parcels. The first course has already undergone pilot-testing and has become an integral part of the capacity-building support provided by the Global Programme on Firearms. The training course on the detection of firearms in postal parcels will undergo pilot-testing in the near future.

24. In the context of the UNODC Education for Justice (E4J) initiative, the Global Programme on Firearms is developing teaching modules to encourage and guide tertiary-level educators in addressing the topic of illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition and related topics. The 14 draft modules were presented to 40 educators and thematic experts in regional meetings organized in Panama City and Vienna in June 2018. The modules are to undergo further pilot-testing and be disseminated in the near future.

25. Pursuant to a recommendation made by the Working Group on Firearms at its fifth meeting, held on 8–10 May 2017, UNODC initiated the collection and analysis of relevant judicial cases and good practices to investigate and prosecute cases of trafficking in firearms linked to terrorism and organized crime. Cases are collected, inter alia, in the course of regional meetings of the Community of Practitioners organized by the Global Programme on Firearms and at training activities, thus allowing for a direct exchange of practical insights among criminal justice practitioners on effective practices, lessons learned and setbacks encountered in the conduct of the investigations, as well as on related criminalization, detection and prosecutorial aspects. It is envisaged that the collected cases, expert commentaries and emerging good practices will be published in a digest of firearms trafficking cases

linked to organized crime and terrorism, which will compile and analyse practical experiences, including concrete legal techniques, common protocols and operational norms in combating those crimes, as well as new and emerging forms of criminality.

26. During the reporting period, UNODC also collaborated with RAND Europe on their empirical research on trafficking in firearms via the darknet and drafted an annex chapter to the published study on the overview of international legal instruments and their ability to respond to this threat. The study and the annex chapter were published in July 2017 and can be downloaded from the UNODC website.[4]

27. Pursuant to its mandate to continue its efforts to improve the methodology of the *UNODC Study on Firearms 2015*, in accordance with Conference resolution 8/3, UNODC has reviewed its data collection methodology and updated its questionnaire on illicit trafficking in firearms in consultation and collaboration with Member States as well as weapons and statistical experts (see section C.5 of this report, below).

C. Technical assistance

1. Enhancing policy and normative development through awareness-raising and legislative assistance to support ratification and implementation of the Firearms Protocol

(a) Increasing knowledge and raising awareness

28. Under the framework of its Education for Justice (E4J) initiative, UNODC took part in two sessions of The Hague International Model United Nations, organized by the Qatar Foundation and held in Doha in January 2017 and January 2018, to sensitize young students from almost 90 countries on firearms crime-related issues.

29. Partnering with several Member States, non-governmental organizations and research institutes, UNODC co-organized, on the margins of intergovernmental meetings, a series of side events addressing a wide range of substantive topics, including the following: diversity and impact of illicit trafficking in firearms, including through the darknet (held in Vienna in October 2016 during the eighth session of the Conference and in May 2017 during the twenty-sixth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice); monitoring illicit arms flows and translating data into concrete action against firearms trafficking in the context of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (held in Vienna in October 2016 during the eighth session of the Conference and in May 2017 during the twenty-sixth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and in New York in June 2018 on the margins of the Third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects); the links between illicit drug and firearms trafficking (held in Vienna in March 2017, during the sixtieth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs); and addressing firearms trafficking in the context of organized crime and terrorism (held in Vienna in May 2018 during the twenty-seventh session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice).

30. UNODC briefed the participants of an informal expert meeting organized by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in Geneva in December 2017 on its efforts and methodology for firearms data collection and contributed to a workshop organized by the Federal Foreign Office of Germany and the Bonn International Centre for Conversion on lessons learned from arms control efforts in fragile and post-conflict contexts, held in Berlin in February 2018.

31. Moreover, UNODC contributed to the discussions on the different aspects of achieving target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals on several occasions,

[4] The RAND study and the annex chapter drafted by UNODC are available from the UNODC website (www.unodc.org/unodc/en/firearms-protocol/news/unodc-analyses-the-policy-implications-of-illicit-firearms-trafficking-on-the-dark-web.html).

including during a meeting held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in February 2018, organized by the government agency of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Wilton Park, and contributed to a training session on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation organized by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for 50 young female professionals, held in Vienna in February 2018.

32. The latest developments in investigating and prosecuting illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition were presented at a regional forum for countries of North Africa and the Sahel region, organized by the UNODC Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa and the Regional Office for West and Central Africa, held in Algiers in January 2018. UNODC also participated as a panellist at the launch, in Brussels in April 2018, of the report entitled *Firearms Acquisition by Terrorists in Europe*, the result of research conducted by the Flemish Peace Institute.

33. With the aim of improving the sharing of information with Member States and reaching a wider audience, UNODC organized an information briefing for Member States on the achievements and priorities of the Global Programme on Firearms in Vienna in January 2018. The event was attended by more than 70 government representatives from 55 Member States. Moreover, the Global Programme on Firearms, with support from the Advocacy Section of UNODC, reviewed and updated its communication strategy to include a more diversified range of tools and approaches, such as the use of the Internet and social media (e.g., on Twitter: @UNODC_Firearms). In 2017, the revised Global Programme's web page received more than 21,400 visits.

(b) Legislative assistance

34. Supporting the enhancement of national legal frameworks on firearms is a long-term engagement strategy to introduce sustainable changes in the beneficiary countries, and is at the core of the UNODC mandate on firearms. In particular, the methodology of the Global Programme on Firearms for supporting legislative reform efforts provides for a flexible and progressively engaging and participatory process that involves diverse national and regional stakeholders. The process starts with a legislative assessment that includes, where possible, a national self-assessment report and then builds on the findings of country visits, interviews and desk reviews and analyses conducted by UNODC experts, resulting in tailor-made support.

35. UNODC has continued to provide legislative advice and assistance to Member States that are considering becoming a party to the Firearms Protocol. During the reporting period, the Office assisted national authorities in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chad and the Niger in their accession process and conducted awareness-raising activities with policymakers and members of parliaments of these countries. UNODC also provided tailored comments and legislative advice on specific transposition questions to France, Germany and Japan. Those three countries reported being in the process of acceding to the Protocol. Moreover, UNODC participated in a pre-accession workshop on the Organized Crime Convention and its Protocols in Vienna for Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu in May 2018.

36. UNODC also continued to assist and advise Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and the Niger in revising and amending their national firearms legislation by first drafting reports on gaps in existing legislation and later convening legal drafting workshops and facilitating the preparation of draft bills on firearms. Legislative drafting workshops with mixed groups of national legal experts and drafters including parliamentarians and representatives from civil society were held in Mali and the Niger in August 2016; in Burkina Faso in September 2016 and March 2017; and in Chad in November 2016, November 2017 and May 2018. In order to take advantage of synergies, UNODC has cooperated in those efforts with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, particularly in Burkina Faso and Mali. In June 2018, UNODC and the members of the drafting committee, at a

high-level ceremony, submitted the final draft law to the Minister of Interior of Chad, for submission to the Council of Ministers and subsequently the Parliament in the following weeks.

37. In June 2018, UNODC also cooperated with Expertise France to review and comment on a draft firearms law for Côte d'Ivoire to facilitate the comprehensive transposition of the Firearms Protocol and the Arms Trade Treaty. The Office will also re-initiate its cooperation on the draft firearms law of Senegal, which was developed with UNODC support in the period 2013–2014.

38. In addition, UNODC supported authorities of Mauritania in translating its new draft law on firearms from French into Arabic; the draft law had been developed with the support of UNODC.

39. In Panama, a joint firearms project is being implemented through the Regional Office for Central America and the Caribbean and the Global Programme on Firearms. In that context, UNODC is assisting national authorities in the review and drafting of a new firearms law through weekly meetings of a legal drafting committee composed of legal experts, policymakers and practitioners from competent entities of the State.

40. UNODC also organized a sensitization workshop for countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council on the international legal framework on firearms, in particular the Firearms Protocol. The event was held in Abu Dhabi in August 2016 and was aimed at providing practitioners with an introduction to the Firearms Protocol and related international instruments.

41. UNODC further organized a regional legislative harmonization workshop for transposing the Firearms Protocol into national legislation, for countries of the Maghreb, held in Tunis in July 2017. Prior to the workshop, a preliminary assessment and comparative analysis of firearms legislation in States of the subregion was prepared by UNODC and presented to participants.

42. UNODC also provided tailored legislative advice to national authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Serbia on the implementation of the import marking requirements under the Firearms Protocol. As a result, both countries incorporated the requirements into their draft laws on firearms.

43. As part of the European Union action plan against illicit trafficking in and use of firearms and explosives, UNODC participated in a series of high-level policy dialogue meetings on firearms legislation between the European Commission and countries of the Middle East and North Africa region (held in Tunisia in July 2017 and in Jordan and Lebanon in December 2017).

2. Technical support for the implementation of preventive and security measures to prevent the illicit manufacturing and theft of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition

44. During the reporting period, UNODC continued to provide technical support to Member States in the implementation of preventive and security measures under the Firearms Protocol, in particular for marking and record-keeping, the storage of seized and confiscated firearms and ammunition, and the collection, management and disposal of illicit firearms.

(a) Marking and record-keeping of firearms

45. UNODC maintained its support to the marking and registration of firearms in West Africa and the Sahel region and organized a refresher capacity-building session on the use of registries in Mali in December 2017. By May 2018, around 50,000 firearms had been marked and registered in Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger, Senegal and Togo. UNODC also provided small grants to the national commissions of Burkina Faso, the Niger and Senegal to further support the marking, registration and destruction activities in the wider national territory. The pick-up vehicles purchased during the reporting period for Senegal and Chad have arrived and are currently being

used to support arms collection activities and the transportation of the mobile marking machines to other areas of the country.

46. Following a study visit to the Vienna Proof House in October 2017 by delegates of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia organized by UNODC, the Office also organized workshops to support these countries' respective national processes of developing and implementing operating procedures for marking imported firearms in December 2017.

47. The Global Programme on Firearms, in cooperation with the UNODC Regional Office for Central America and the Caribbean in Panama, continued to work with the Information and Technology Service of UNODC on the development of a comprehensive record-keeping system on firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. The system is to be operationalized first in Panama, as part of that country's national project on firearms which started in June 2017 and later in Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and the Niger, subject to additional funding. It is then to be provided to other requesting countries and customized to their specific needs.

(b) Physical security and stockpile management

48. The proper storage and management of firearms poses a particular challenge for many countries that face thefts and leakages from their storage facilities, as well as in relation to securing the chain of custody that is required to produce valid evidence in court.

(c) Collection, management and disposal of firearms

49. Arms collection campaigns form part of national efforts to reduce the uncontrolled proliferation of firearms and reduce the risk of their theft and diversion into illicit markets.

50. During the reporting period, UNODC worked closely with national authorities and civil society organizations of Burkina Faso, the Niger and Senegal in the development of awareness-raising campaigns to collect illicit firearms, with messages tailored to specific population groups, including young men, women and youth in general. Voluntary arms surrender campaigns were launched in February and March 2018 in the three above-mentioned countries and were supported by high-level authorities, resulting in the voluntary surrender of almost 700 firearms within the first two months of the campaigns. Follow-up support will focus on the identification, recording and destruction of illicit firearms, as well as on the procurement of relevant equipment and training on its use.

51. In August 2016, UNODC took part in and provided technical advice for the destruction in Argentina of 25,000 illicit firearms linked to crime cases. The destruction, organized by the Government of Argentina, targeted illicit firearms stored in court deposits in the provinces of Buenos Aires, Mendoza and Santa Fe.

52. In Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Panama, part of the integrated assistance package agreed with the respective Governments includes the record-keeping system, as well as the design, development and implementation of a national arms surrender campaign and a simultaneous arms registration campaign, with related capacity-building, awareness-raising and technical support.

3. Strengthening criminal justice responses to detect, investigate and prosecute the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition

53. Detecting illicit trafficking movements, dismantling the criminal networks or groups involved in trafficking in firearms or other serious crimes, and bringing the perpetrators to justice are essential preconditions for reducing illicit arms flows and combating all forms of organized crime, as expressed in target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. In practice, however, criminal investigations of firearms trafficking offences are rare and difficult to carry out.

54. During the reporting period, UNODC continued to deliver specialized training and capacity-building courses on the investigation and prosecution of cases of trafficking in firearms and its links to organized crime and related matters. The training sessions carried out in Algeria (November 2017), Burkina Faso (March 2017), Chad (October 2016, with a session planned for July 2018), Mali (November 2016), Mauritania (November 2016) and the Niger (December 2016) strengthened the capacity of almost 200 law enforcement practitioners from police, gendarmerie and customs, as well as judges and prosecutors, on the identification and classification of firearms, measures to prevent their trafficking, crime scene management, intelligence management, investigation techniques and firearms tracing, international cooperation and the exchange of information. Representatives of national offices of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) took part in some of the training sessions, and the training in Mali was supported by trainers from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

55. UNODC, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina and, in one instance, also with the World Customs Organization and the skills academy of the United Kingdom Border Force, trained customs and law enforcement officers from Bosnia and Herzegovina, including from the regional centres in Tuzla, Mostar, Banja Luka and Sarajevo, as well as members of the mobile customs units, on the detection of trafficking in firearms at land border crossing points. The training courses, held in November 2017 and June 2018, also contained practical exercises on detecting firearms during which the participants used training vehicles to gain hands-on experience in locating possible concealments of illicit firearms.

56. In addition, UNODC joined INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization in conceptualizing and implementing the different phases of a simultaneous law enforcement operation named TRIGGER III, which took place in Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Nigeria in November 2017, during which local authorities seized 130 firearms, including 49 Kalashnikov-type weapons and several rounds of ammunition. The operation led to the initiation of 50 tracing requests, which was an encouraging improvement over previous operations. UNODC placed an emphasis on promoting a coherent criminal justice response and further investigation of identified cases of trafficking in firearms and supported the engagement of prosecutors of the participating Member States in the operation. In 2018, UNODC started supporting a similar police operation in countries of the Middle East and North Africa (TRIGGER IV), in which it will also contribute to facilitate the participation of representatives, in addition to providing capacity-building support.

57. Similarly, in November 2017, UNODC contributed to the European Police Office (Europol) "Joint Action Day Calibre", a police operation to counter trafficking in firearms in the Western Balkans. UNODC also participated in the training session led by the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) on online firearms investigations, held in Madrid in June 2018.

58. In December 2017, UNODC and the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) held a training session in Belgrade on the identification and tracing of firearms and ammunition for police officers from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia.

59. Representatives of the Global Programme on Firearms participated in a conference organized within the framework of "I.E. TrainNet", an initiative of the UNODC Global Programme on Building Effective Networks against Transnational Organized Crime, hosted by the National Security Commission, the Federal Police (in its capacity as President of the American Police Community) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, held in Mexico City in August 2016. The conference brought together 200 law enforcement officers and training experts from more than 40 countries and organizations. The fifth session of the conference was dedicated to

training initiatives focused on monitoring, criminalization and investigation of firearms trafficking.

4. Fostering and promoting international cooperation and information exchange to address the transnational dimension of trafficking in illicit firearms and related issues

60. International cooperation in criminal matters is a fundamental part of the fight against illicit trafficking in firearms, including the regular sharing of information and good practices among practitioners, which is explicitly encouraged in article 12 of the Protocol.

61. During the reporting period, UNODC promoted the creation of an informal group of criminal justice practitioners dealing with firearms matters, referred to as the "Community of Practitioners". The initiative is aimed at promoting better interaction among the different communities and fostering regional and interregional cooperation to counter trafficking in firearms and its links to other forms of organized crime and serious crimes, including terrorism, through the regular exchange of information, case-based experiences and good practices among criminal justice, law enforcement and firearms control practitioners.

62. Meetings of the Community of Practitioners were held in Algiers and Belgrade in December 2017, with more than 60 participants from Algeria, Mali, Morocco, Mauritania and the Niger (the Algiers meeting) and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (the Belgrade meeting). A third meeting of the Community of Practitioners took place in Vienna in May 2018, convening prosecutors from countries of the Western Balkans to identify measures to increase the number of prosecuted cases on firearms trafficking in the region. A similar event is to be held in Niamey, the Niger, in July 2018. The three meetings also complement the development of the digest of illicit firearms cases.

63. Subject to the availability of funding, UNODC would like to organize cross-regional meetings among members of the Community of Practitioners for a greater cross-fertilization of experiences among different regions and to use and build on existing platforms of criminal justice practitioners to address firearms issues with a larger audience.

5. Mapping and monitoring flows of illicit firearms by means of global data collection and analysis to enhance the intelligence picture of trafficking in firearms and its criminal context

64. UNODC continued to promote the generation, collection and analysis of firearms data in order to identify firearms trafficking trends and patterns and as an evidence base for decision-making at the policy and operational levels.

65. In 2016, UNODC began updating the methodology used for the *UNODC Study on Firearms 2015*, pursuant to the mandate contained in Conference resolution 8/3.

66. In September 2016, the Global Programme on Firearms and the Research and Trend Analysis Branch of UNODC (Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs) organized an informal expert group meeting in Vienna, with the participation of a wide range of governmental representatives from 15 Member States, national and international experts, five international organizations and five non-governmental organizations. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss lessons learned from past and existing data collection efforts at the national, regional and international levels, and revise the UNODC illicit arms flows questionnaire.

67. Following another round of informal consultations with selected firearms and statistical experts in March 2017, UNODC launched a pilot test exercise of the revised

illicit arms flows questionnaire.[5] The responses to the exercise as well as the feedback received during three regional meetings on firearms data collection and analysis were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire, which was launched on 14 June 2018.[6]

68. Further, with a view to enhancing national and international data collection and analysis efforts to monitor illicit firearms trafficking flows and to promote more effective international cooperation and information exchange among practitioners, UNODC organized a series of regional meetings in Addis Ababa (September 2017), in Panama City (November 2017) and Brussels (January 2018). In total, more than 120 participants from more than 50 countries, as well as regional and non-governmental organizations concerned, participated in and contributed to the meetings, providing comments and feedback on the pilot questionnaire and engaging in practical exercises on completing it. A fourth meeting is to be held in Vienna in July 2018 for the Balkan countries, with experts from other Eastern and Western European countries, and a fifth meeting is planned to be held for countries of the Middle East and North Africa in the second semester of 2018.

69. Through its "champion country initiative", UNODC has also started to work with selected countries and subregions with the aim of highlighting through national or regional analysis specific aspects of the firearms trafficking problem and to showcase through replicable good practices ways to stimulate and encourage the generation, analysis and use of firearms-related data in other countries and regions.

70. UNODC is seeking additional funding to provide other countries and regions, in particular, Asia and the Pacific and the Caribbean, technical advice and assistance to participating countries and their designated focal points in the generation, collection and analysis of firearms-related data.

D. Coordination with other relevant international and regional organizations as well as with civil society and the private sector

1. Cooperation within the United Nations

71. UNODC has continued to contribute to the work of the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA), the system-wide coordination platform established by the Secretary-General to promote the exchange of information and coordination on ongoing initiatives and to support the Organization in "delivering as one" on the issue of small arms. In May 2018, CASA principals met to discuss the Secretary-General's new Agenda for Disarmament, including the establishment of a trust fund facility and the contribution of each CASA member, through a joint workplan.

72. In May 2017, UNODC contributed to an open briefing for Member States on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons, organized by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate in New York.

73. At the field level, UNODC continues to coordinate and cooperate its activities with relevant United Nations agencies and offices, such as UNDP/SEESAC, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and its regional centres and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

74. In December 2016, UNODC participated in the sixth meeting of national commissions on small arms and light weapons of the member countries of SEESAC, an initiative of UNDP and other organizations, held in Budva, Montenegro.

[5] The pilot exercise was conducted with 39 voluntary countries, of which 12 provided written feedback. Several other countries provided their comments at regional meetings.

[6] The illicit arms flows questionnaire can be downloaded at www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/statistics-crime-iafq.html.

75. The Office supported the development of the roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024 by participating in three coordination meetings, in Podgorica, Belgrade and Tirana. UNODC also provided substantive inputs for the formulations of the goals and key performance indicators of the roadmap. The roadmap, to be officially adopted during the Western Balkans summit to be held in London in July 2018, will become the foundation for an integrated approach on tackling issues related to small arms and light weapons in the subregion.

76. Representatives of UNODC participated in a seminar for member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Timor-Leste on illicit trafficking in and diversion of small arms and light weapons organized by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, held in Phnom Penh in December 2017, and continued to coordinate its technical assistance activities in the Sahel region with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa.

2. Cooperation with other international and regional organizations

77. In November 2016, UNODC participated in the third Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System (iARMS) working group meeting, organized by INTERPOL in Lyon, France. UNODC has through its various project activities supported and encouraged the use of iARMS by Member States. During the reporting period, representatives of the national central bureaux of INTERPOL took part in training activities in West Africa and facilitated some of the training sessions.

78. With a focus on the African region, in March 2017, UNODC participated in a second meeting jointly organized by the African Union and Germany to promote cooperation and coordination in the area of small arms physical security and stockpile management in the Sahel region. UNODC also took part in the second meeting of the African Union-Germany coordination platform, held in Addis Ababa in October 2017, which brought together representatives of the African Union, African subregional organizations, United Nations agencies and other implementing agencies. The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the African Union initiative on silencing the guns, a continental plan of action on the control of illicit small arms and light weapons. UNODC provided substantive advice on activities that could be carried out in support of the plan and to which it could contribute, particularly in relation to the need to strengthen the criminal justice response as a means of improving the fight against trafficking in illicit firearms.

79. Additionally, UNODC ensured cooperation with other regional organizations mandated to work on firearms issues, such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Economic Community of Central African States, representatives of which participated in the regional meeting on data collection for Africa, as well as the Arab Maghreb Union, representatives of which participated in a regional legislative workshop for Maghreb countries.

80. UNODC has had regular contact with the European Union, in particular with the European Commission's Firearms Task Force and the European Firearms Experts Group, to address the need to strengthen the legislative frameworks on firearms, enhance national and international data collection and analysis of the illicit trafficking flows, and reinforce the criminal justice response to detect and prosecute illicit firearms trafficking and its links to organized crime and terrorism.

81. In October 2016, UNODC participated in a seminar on multidisciplinary approaches in the fight against firearms trafficking in the European Union, organized by the Firearms Driver of EMPACT in Alicante, Spain.

82. UNODC cooperated with the Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre and participated in a regional workshop with a focus on the links between firearms trafficking and cybercrime held in Tirana in April 2018. UNODC also participated in

the regional steering group meeting on small arms and light weapons, organized by UNDP/SEESAC, held in Belgrade in March 2018.

83. UNODC supported the training course on firearms in the Western Balkans, organized by the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training and held in Zagreb, focusing on the enhancement of police and judicial cooperation in the Western Balkans.

84. In August 2016, the Gulf Cooperation Council supported the organization of a UNODC training workshop for Member States on the international legal framework related to illicit trafficking in firearms and the Firearms Protocol, held in Abu Dhabi.

3. Cooperation with civil society and the private sector

85. Participation and cooperation with civil society is a cross-cutting element of the Global Programme on Firearms. UNODC has actively engaged with civil society organizations at various levels, from legislative development to training activities, through the development of a training course on civil society participation and oversight to the collaboration in the implementation of advocacy materials. During the period under review, civil society organizations participated in training workshops organized by the Office in Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger.

86. In addition to events mentioned above, UNODC participated in and contributed to meetings and seminars organized by, inter alia, the Centre for the Reduction of Firearms Crime, Trafficking and Terrorism of the University of Northampton, United Kingdom (February 2018), the Observatory on Organized Crime of the University of Milan, Italy (February 2018) and several meetings organized by the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons, as part of its projects funded by the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, held in Panama City (May 2017), Dakar (June 2017), Johannesburg, South Africa (February 2018) and Jakarta (May 2018).

87. UNODC remains engaged with key organizations working on the issue of illicit trafficking in firearms, such as Conflict Armament Research, the Bonn International Centre for Conversion, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, the Institute for Security Studies, the Joint Research Centre on Transnational Crime (Transcrime), the Mines Advisory Group, RAND Europe, Small Arms Survey and the West African Action Network on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

IV. Priority areas for further action

88. UNODC, through its Global Programme on Firearms, will continue to promote and implement an integrated approach to prevent and fight the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, based on its five-pillar approach.

89. Given that firearms are often a cross-cutting element and common denominator of organized crime and terrorism, the Office is developing a strategy to address firearms trafficking particularly in the context of these crimes.

90. Focused activities are planned to ensure greater gender mainstreaming of the progamme and its curriculum, and to promote specific strategies in pilot countries.

91. The Office will also focus on promoting a proactive, investigative approach to firearms trafficking for firearms seized at borders and in crime scenes, fostering the detection, investigation and prosecution of those crimes and the overall generation, collection and analysis of firearms data that can serve as an evidence base for decision-making at the policy and operational levels.

V. Conclusions

92. The illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms and their links to organized crime, terrorism and other serious crimes remains a pressing problem in many countries and regions.

93. UNODC has continued to promote the ratification and implementation of the Firearms Protocol and to assist Member States in its implementation, building on its five pillars — legislation, technical support, criminal justice response, international cooperation, and data collection and analysis — and is committed to continuing its efforts to work collaboratively with Member States, international and regional organizations, civil society, academia and the private industry in their common endeavour.

94. However, sustainable and predictable funds are required in order to ensure the presence of specialized staff and the continuation of the activities of UNODC and to allow it to respond to the growing technical assistance requests from different countries and regions.

V.18-05149